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SUBJECT: SEOUL - MEDIA REACTION

Subject: Media Reaction; Seoul

G20 PITTSBURGH SUMMIT

"What President Lee Should Do at G20 Summit"

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo editorialized (09/21): "The ROK is already a member of the meeting of the Group of 20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, and will hold the presidency of the meeting next year. The ROK, which is being touted as the first country to recover from the global financial crisis, is well positioned to play a constructive role as an 'honest broker' between the developed and developing countries. In every respect, it is natural and reasonable for the ROK to host next year's G20 summit. This is a point President Lee should stress in Pittsburgh."

MISSILE SHIELD

"U.S. Policy Switch Is a Victory in Rationalism"

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun editorialized (09/19): "The Obama Administration's change in policy is, despite its denial, aimed at improving ties with Russia. Currently, the U.S. is in urgent need of Russia's help to resolve the issues of Iran and Afghanistan, the U.S.'s most important foreign policy goals at the moment. The U.S. also needs to begin discussions on a new agreement to take the place of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia, which is set to expire. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has indicated that he views Obama's decision as a responsible move and intends to respond in a forward-thinking way. Obama's policy shift has shown the potential to bring the international order into an age of cooperation rather than conflict."

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC: DPRK

"We Should Not Be Overly Reactive to Pyongyang's Hint of Returning to Multilateral Talks"

Conservative Dong-a Ilbo editorialized (09/19): "In a situation where the North's return to the Six-Party Talks does not guarantee

the resolution of the nuclear issue, Pyongyang simply mentioned its intent to hold bilateral and multilateral dialogue. ... North Korea declared in April that it will never rejoin the Six-Party Talks. While publicly proposing multilateral dialogue, the North may demand trilateral or four-party talks in order to drive a wedge between the Six-Party countries. Judging from its past behavior, North Korea may also ask for a quid pro quo for resuming dialogue."

"Prepare for a Big Change in Addressing N. Korea"

Moderate Hankook Ilbo editorialized (09/21): "There is nothing wrong with the ROKG's position that it will make a judgment after confirming what intentions and conditions the North has behind such overtures. However, we cannot shake off the feeling that Seoul is too inactive or passive toward the possibility of a big change in addressing North Korea's nuclear issue. ... President Lee Myung-bak left for the U.S. yesterday to attend a meeting of the UN General Assembly and the G20 Financial Summit in Pittsburgh. President Lee should use this visit as an opportunity to take a leadership role while, at the same time, adopting a more active attitude toward this new development in the North Korean nuclear issue."

STEPHENS